



## Student Advocacy Tips

- Know your rights and use your voice to speak about your child's strengths, needs, and interests. The PACER website offers a wealth of resources, and they provide workshops to help equip parents.
- You know your child best, and you are the most qualified person to advocate for your child. Evaluations and test scores don't show the complete picture of who your child is, and you can describe your child in other settings.
- Involve your child as much as possible in the IEP process. By law, starting at age 14 or 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students must be invited to IEP meeting to discuss transition services such as employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.
- Use this easy to follow checklist from PACER to prepare for IEP meeting.  
<https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c288.pdf>
- Know who will be present and the purpose of the meeting ahead of time.
- Prepare questions or concerns before the meeting, and check them off as they are answered.
- Consider asking your child's IEP manager to add your topics of concern to the meeting agenda.
- You can ask someone to accompany you at the meeting such as a significant other, family member, friend, or representative from a disability organization.
- Keep track of who you spoke with, when, and responses in a notebook or log.
- Consider using a binder or file box to organize your child's IEP/ 504 paper work, evaluations, parent resources, medical documents, examples of your child's work, or other relevant documents.
- Bring any data, student's work, or relevant documents to the meeting.
- Educate your team about your child's condition(s)/ disabilities.
- Utilize EFMN Seizure Smart Schools program to bring education to your child's peers and school staff.
- Be involved with writing IEP goals and share your short-term and long-term vision for your child.
- Share how your child's disability has impacted his/her education and what accommodations would benefit your child.
- Use positive and assertive communication with school staff.
- Listen with respect.
- Ask for clarification when needed to make sure that you understand each other.
- If you disagree with something, respectfully share your feelings.
- Set dates for action steps, ask for it in writing, and hold each other accountable for following through with commitments.

Advocacy Tips from Pacer Center's Special Education Rights Publications Retrieved From:  
<https://pacer.org/publications/specedrights.asp>.